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QUESTION OF VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL AND OTHER DEPENDENT COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES

Letter dated 17 October 1994 from the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Indonesia to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights

Pursuant to the Chairman's statement on the situation of human rights in East Timor at the fiftieth session of the Commission on Human Rights, in particular concerning greater access to the province, I have the honour to furnish you with information concerning the recent visit of the British parliamentary delegation to East Timor province, Indonesia from 18 to 20 September 1994 as part of their three-week visit to Indonesia, from 8 to 25 September 1994.

It is the ardent wish of the Government of the Republic of Indonesia that such information be made available to the fifty-first session of the Commission on Human Rights in 1995 in extenso.

(Signed): Soemadi D.M. Brotodiningrat
Ambassador

BRITISH PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION TO VISIT EAST TIMOR PROVINCE

A British parliamentary delegation has visited East Timor from 18 to 20 September 1994 as a part of their visit to Indonesia from 8 to 25 September 1994. The five-member parliamentary delegation was headed by Mr. Patrick Nicholls and consisted of Messrs. Robert Bank, Cecil Walker, Roy Beggs, Charles Goodson and James Kilfedder. While in Jakarta, they met with President Suharto, Foreign Minister Ali Alatas, a number of other cabinet ministers, members of the National Commission on Human Rights. In East Timor, they met the representatives of ICRC as well as Bishop Bello, the head of the Roman Catholic community in East Timor.

The visit to East Timor, which lasted for three days, was made not only to find out more about the situation in the province but also aimed at obtaining first-hand information about the steps taken by the Indonesian competent authority to prevent the November 1991 tragic incident from happening again, and having a close look at the development progress of the former Portuguese colony which was integrated into Indonesia 18 years ago.

In an interview given to the mass media following the visit to East Timor, Mr. Nicholls asserted that the human rights of the people in the province have been protected in accordance with the country's relevant laws and regulations. British ministers and members of parliament were impressed by what Indonesia had done in developing East Timor, and for that reason Indonesia deserved special credit. He also commended the armed forces' role for their civic mission programmes, for instance, in providing computer courses and basic technological training for the East Timorese youths.

Mr. Nicholls believed that following the Portuguese withdrawal, it was natural if the East Timorese people wanted to join their brothers in other parts of Indonesia since geographically East Timor was part of the Indonesian archipelago. To accelerate the development in the country's 27th province, he maintained that the country should give a high priority in the development programme in East Timor so that it can keep pace with other provinces.

During the interview, he further said that criticism launched by foreign countries against Indonesia on East Timor was virtually caused by exaggerated reports by international media about the province. A country should not air its views on another before knowing the real situation in that other country, he said. He finally voiced his disagreement with reports portraying negative human rights records on East Timor.